



Community Gardens **FACILITIES STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES**

Saint Paul Public Schools endeavors to support the community and educational benefits inherent in community gardens and outdoor learning spaces. Through the application of these standards for the implementation and maintenance of these amenities, safe, responsible and sustainable gardens can be achieved.

Who can spearhead the effort to create a community garden?

Schools, individual grades or classes, Parent-Teacher Organizations, Site Councils, and outside civic groups like District Councils may all approach a school's leadership about creating a community garden. If the school determines that the garden meets the mission of the school, the school principal formally becomes the applicant for approval.

What is the process for getting approval to create a community garden?

In order to create successful, long-lasting gardens, the following steps must be taken prior to starting to implement a community garden:

- School leadership contacts the Manager of Facility Planning (Matt Throop, Matthew.Throop@spps.org) to inform of interest in creating a community garden.
 - Facility Planning can provide a multitude of support services for the design and planning phase of a garden, including background site plan drawings, preliminary design services (at discretion of the Manager) and identification of potential site-specific pitfalls.
- The community garden stakeholders (school leadership and the organizing body, if applicable) achieve consensus in the creation of:
 - A site plan, drawn to scale, of the community garden.
 - A memorandum of understanding detailing year-round maintenance schedule / expectations as well as the plan for transitioning the primary responsibility of the garden as current leaders cease to be involved.
 - The memorandum is to include provisions to indemnify, defend and hold the District harmless from any injuries, damages or losses, including costs and attorney's fees arising from the willful or negligent acts or omissions of the community gardeners, their employees, officers, guests and invitees.
 - Facility Planning can provide a template for this memorandum.
- The school principal e-mails the Manager of Facility Planning the stakeholder documents and affirms her / his support for the creation of the community garden.
- Saint Paul Public Schools Facilities Department, in consultation with the Department of Security and Emergency Management, review the stakeholder documents to:
 - Verify the intended layout adheres to the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), allowing for natural surveillance of the site from public areas and streets.
 - Ensure that grounds maintenance and snow removal will not be impeded by the creation of the community garden.
 - Verify stormwater runoff will not be negatively affected by the creation of the community garden.

What are the costs to establish a community garden?

Costs for establishing a community garden will vary tremendously based on the type and scale of garden as well as volunteer effort organized. District capital funding cannot be used to establish or support community gardens, so any and all costs are to be borne by the school / organizing body.

How do I put my approved community garden in?

Since it is expected that most gardens will be installed by volunteers, certain guidelines must be adhered to in order to maintain a safe and orderly construction process

- All underground utilities must be marked prior to any work occurring on site. Call Gopher State One Call (651.454.0002) at least 48 hours prior to start of construction and they will mark the location of buried utilities for free.
- All digging must be done with hand tools only. Saint Paul Public Schools will not supply any tools.
- If, at any point, questions of safety or unforeseen conditions arise STOP THE WORK and contact Facility Planning. Safety is always the first priority.
- At the completion of work, the site is to notify Facility Planning. Facility Planning to do an on-site inspection to ensure that the garden adheres to the approved design layout.

What are the district standards for a community garden?

In an effort to promote safety and security, limit liability and ensure that all applicable codes are followed, all community gardens must adhere to the following mandates:

- Community gardens must be kept neat and orderly **year round**. It is the responsibility of the school to enforce this standard.
- All plants recognized as a [noxious weed](#) by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture must be promptly eradicated. Failure to control noxious weeds will result in immediate removal of the garden.
- Unless given prior written approval by the Manager of Facility Planning, community gardens are to be located on non-primary building faces. Gardens may not be located within one-third the length of the face of the building from the primary and secondary entrances to the building.
- No utilities, temporary or permanent, may be installed as part of the garden. Similarly, no water storage containers may be housed on site. Exterior hose bibs are to be used strictly when gardeners are on site (i.e. sprinklers on timers cannot be used). Hose bib keys, given out at the sole discretion of the Site Administrator, are to be maintained in a secure lock-box when not in use.
- No structure taller than 18" may be constructed without written approval by the Director of Facilities. No enclosed structures (such as tool storage sheds) may be constructed.
- Composting bins are to be located in a non-prominent location and are to be visually transparent (constructed of fencing material).
- All gardening is to be organic / pesticide-free. No chemical herbicides or fertilizers may be on site at any time.
- Community gardens that fail to meet all of the above standards shall be removed and the area re-seeded with grass at the expense of the school.
 - Schools shall receive one warning, via an e-mail to the Principal, that the garden is no longer in compliance with these standards. From the date of this notification, the school has 14 days to correct the issue(s).
- Saint Paul Public Schools retains the right to repurpose the area of the community garden if, in the District's sole opinion, it is in the District's best interest.

Please feel free to call the Facilities One-Stop (651.744.1800) with any questions!